Patrick O’Connor

LS 411

RJ.1

January 25, 2022

The American dream as many know it is a happy family including 2.4 children, a private yard surrounded by white picket fence, and a nice car or two. While this may be the definition that many imagine when thinking about the American dream in the suburbs, Jackson within the book Crabgrass Frontier goes into less specific and more inclusive when describing the distinguishing characteristics of American suburbs. The distinguishing characteristics of the American suburbs include class, function, separation, and density. First, the American suburbs consist of mostly middle to upper class citizens. Along with this, the function of the suburban home is specifically for family living with a focus on protection, bonding, and privacy. Along the same lines, separation from work and home is essential when characterizing the American suburbs. A daily journey from home to work initially allowed for separation of home and business. Lastly, the density of homes and thus population compared to the previous city living is quite viewable when examining any American suburb.

While reading the text, I was reassured in my personal experience of that the suburbs were strongly connected to the city of Chicago through the rail system. While growing up, I knew that transportation of goods and people were essential for city growth but had never fully made the connection that the railroads (Metro Train) was the reason that many cities achieved the booming state that they remain in today. Along with this idea, when examining the current housing market as many wealthy individuals move away from the City of Chicago as covid has struck shutdown after shutdown. The most valuable properties remain those that are far from the city but centrally located in suburb cities thus being close to railroad tracks leading into Chicago.